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SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON NEWLY APPOINTED HOKIM OF TASHKENT
PROVINCE RUSTAM KURBONNAZAROVICH HOLMATOV

REF: a) 08 TASHKENT 469

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1. (SBU) On December 16, 2008, President Islam Karimov appointed Rustam Kurbonnazarovich Holmatov as Hokim of Tashkent Province. (Note: This administrative region does not include the City of Tashkent itself, which is governed separately, but includes the populous territory surrounding the capital city. End note.) Holmatov, an ethnic Uzbek, was born in 1961 in the Akkurgan District of Tashkent Province. He graduated from the Tashkent Economic Institute. In 1977 he started his career as a worker in the Soviet Farm Akkurgan. From 1987 to 1995 he worked successively as an economist, senior economist, and principal economist at this farm. (Note: Despite the lofty titles, such economists essentially performed bookkeeping and accounting functions on large Soviet collective farms. End note.)

2. (SBU) From 1995 to 2003 he served successively as the First Deputy Hokim of Akkurgan District, Hokim of Chinaz District, and First Deputy Hokim of Tashkent Province Chief of the Department of Agriculture and Water Management. From 2003 to December 16, 2008, he was the Hokim of Kuyichirchik District of Tashkent Province.

3. (SBU) Holmatov was appointed after President Karimov relieved acting Hokim Ziyovuddin Niyozov of his duties due to mistakes and shortcomings, according to a broadcast on the Uzbek Television First Channel on December 16. The sacking took place in typical fashion, with President Karimov personally presiding over a local council of the peoples deputies to lambaste their failed local leaders. Several sub-regional district heads were also fired as a result of grave mistakes, and Karimov chided them for poor performance in agricultural output, failure to attract foreign investment, and even corruption.

4. (SBU) Holmatov attended the December 18 groundbreaking of the new General Motors power train plant, which will be built on his turf. The Ambassador spoke with him on that occasion and found Holmatov to be well-disposed, although Holmatov did not deliver on a promise to look into the shutoff of gas supplies to the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Tashkent, which may reflect his relatively weak position.

Comment:

5. (SBU) It is not unusual for Karimov to lower the boom on his hokims, and in 2008 alone he also sacked the hokims of Samargand, Ferghana, Khorezm, and Surkhandaryo Provinces (reftel). We suspect that by publicly shaming and blaming deposed governors Karimov is attempting to convince the population that it is local incompetence and graft that is dragging down the local economies rather than misguided national policies. The examples of embezzlement and mismanagement Karimov cited probably are real, which makes local officials an easy target.
NORLAND

To view the entire SMART message, go to URL http://repository.state.sgov.gov/_layouts/OSS/SearchResults.aspx?k=messageid:09994c2c-bf81-42d3-80